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Message Text

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46
ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EUR-25 IO-14 NIC-01 OMB-01 AID-20 CU-04

SY-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 DRC-01

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R 151105Z MAR 74
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7854

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINS, SU
SUBJ: POLITICAL DETAINEES RELEASED

1. GOS HAS IN PAST WEEK RELEASED MOST, IF NOT ALL, THOSE DETAINED BUT NEVER CHARGED WITH SPECIFIC OFFENSES IN WAKE AUGUST-SEPTEMBER DISTURBANCES. GOVERNMENT IS THEREBY RESPECTING CONSTITUTION AND CRIMINAL PROCEDURES ACT WHICH ALLOW FOR DETENTION WITHOUT CHARGE INITIALLY FOR TEN DAYS, AND SUBSEQUENTLY FOR TWO CONSECUTIVE THREE-MONTH PERIODS, AFTER WHICH EITHER CHARGES MUST BE BROUGHT OR PERSONS RLEASED. GOVERNMENT HAS, HOWEVER, OBVIOUSLY TAKEN THIS ACTION GRUDGINGLY, WAITING UNTIL VIRTUALLY LAST DAY OF SIX-MONTH PLUS TEN-DAY PERIOD ALLOWED. EQUALLY CLEARLY THERE IS NO INTENTION IN GENERAL TO FORGIVE AND FORGET, SINCE THOSE, INCLUDING SADIQ EL-MAHDI, DETAINED MORE RECENTLY REMAIN IN JAIL.

2. GOS HESITATION NOT SURPRISING IN VIEW SOME OF THOSE INVOLVED. FOR EXAMPLE, THOSE ALREADY RELEASED INCLUDE HASSAN AL-TARABI, HEAD OF MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD WHICH REGIME BELEIVES TO HAVE BEEN DRIVING FORCE BEHIND MOST OF RECENT STUDENT DISTURBANCES, AND MIRGHANI AL-NASRI,
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HEAD OF BAR ASSOCIATION (AND FORMER HEAD BSO DEFENSE

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TEAM) AGAINST WHOM NIMEIRI HAS STATED HE HAS CONCRETE EVIDENCE OF TIES WITH LIBYA IN ANTI-REGIME ACTION. ALSO INCLUDED IN THOSE PRESUMABLY ALREADY RELEASED IS MUSA MATAI, HEAD OF RAILWAY WORKERS UNION WHICH PROVIDED MAIN MUSCLE BEHIND EFFORT UNSEAT GOVERNMENT LAST SEPTEMBER. FACED WITH PROSPECT OF THESE PEOPLE ONCE AGAIN WORKING AGAINST REGIME, WE UNDERSTAND NIMEIRI HAD EVEN FAVORED CHANGE IN LAW TO PERMIT ADDITIONAL SIX MONTHS DETENTION BUT WAS TALKED OUT OF IT BY ATTORNEY GENERAL ZAKI MUSTAFA.

3. COMMENT: ACTIONS BOTH OF THOSE RELEASED AND OF GOS ITSELF IN NEXT FEW WEEKS WILL NO DOUBT BE CAREFULLY CALCULATED. WE HAD HEARD SPECULATION THAT GOVERNMENT WOULD GO THROUGH MOTIONS OF OBSERVING LAW BY RELEASING THOSE WHO HAD COMPLETED SIX-MONTHS AND THEN REARRESTING THEM 24 HOURS LATER. SO FAR THIS HAS NOT HAPPENED, BUT WE SUSPECT GOS KEEPING THOSE RELEASED UNDER CLOSE OBSERVATION. ANY SIGN OF RENEWED ANTI-REGIME ACTIVITY LIKELY BE FOLLOWED BY IMMEDIATE RE-ARREST SUCH CONTROVERSIAL PERSONALITIES. MEANWHILE, HOWEVER, REGIME HAS AGAIN SHOWN THAT ITS FULL CONTROL CONTAINS ELEMENT VELVET GLOVE AS WELL AS IRON HAND.
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